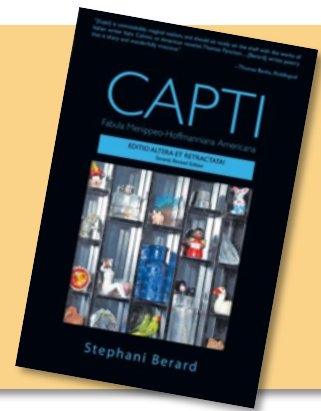


Introducing ...

# CAPTI: Fabula Menippeo-Hoffmanniana Americana

by Stephen A. Berard

*the first Latin novel published since 1741!*



In *Capti*, the first book of the *Sphinx Heptology*, Stephen Berard weaves a multicultural, particolored, sometimes surreal and often hilarious tapestry of satire, magic realism, myth, science, and poetry. The central character is a highly functional autistic Seattle ballet dancer, Woody Fava, who speaks in verse and uses chromoptic therapy in the form of colored eyeglasses to help himself make sense of his world. In search of the Goddess, whom he is sure has recently moved into a condo somewhere in Seattle, Woody quits his ballet job, quickly impoverishes himself, and has a series of disturbing misadventures, until finally disappearing...only to reemerge in Los Angeles at the center of a bizarre murder mystery.

Based loosely on two novelas by the German Romantic author E.T.A. Hoffmann, this poetic novel uses primarily literary fantasy and satire to explore the ways in which all living beings are either trapped or impaired or both (the Latin participle *captus* actually means both) but how they are also all somehow interconnected. (*continued on reverse*)

## Reviews and recommendations

"The glory of the book is the exuberant language: this is not Cicero's Latin, but more like a post-modern Tacitus, a latter-day Lucan, a spiritual descendant of M. Terentius Varro. ...There are descriptions galore...a long, satirical evocation of Seattle...and a description of LA that would be at home in Hugo or Dickens. ...Its blend of modern form, modern scientific or philosophical motifs, and ancient language is almost *steampunk* in style."

— Anne Mahoney (Tufts), *The Classical Outlook*

"[Capti] is unmistakably magical realism, and should sit nicely on the shelf with the works of Italian writer Italo Calvino or American novelist Thomas Pynchon. ...[Berard] writes poetry that is sharp and wonderfully vivacious."

— Thomas Banks, *Multilingual*

"The author's command of Latin is truly virtuosic and I would say of his impressive achievement, as Cicero did of Lucretius's poem, that it is 'multis luminibus ingenii, multae tamen artis,' a work 'marked by many flashes of genius and much skill.' Readers who have lamented that Apuleius, the madcap, linguistically virtuosic author of *The Golden Ass*, did not follow up his novel with another similarly delicious work will rejoice when they discover in Professor Berard a twenty-first century Apuleius."

— Dr. Albert R. Baca, Professor Emeritus, California State University Northridge

"While you tackle Berard's use of language, which is not always easy, you will find yourself, as it were, dear reader, in something of a Fellini-esque river."

— Gaius Licoppe and Francisca Deraedt, editors of *Melissa*

"This extremely skilled professor of Latin uses language that is sometimes grave and sometimes comical and so fluid that this novel, whose language is unique in the variety of its vocabulary and its modes of expression, seems extremely well suited to attracting the attention of readers."

— Vittorio Ciarrocchi, Latin writer

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**Stephen A. Berard** graduated from the University of California (Los Angeles) with a BA in Classics and received an MA in Latin and a C.Phil. in Classics from the University of California (Berkeley). At the Monterey Institute of International Studies, he completed an MA in German Studies ("Südländische Musik im dichterischen Werk E.T.A. Hoffmanns") and received a Ph.D. in Germanic Linguistics from the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) ("Infinitive Usage in Biblical Gothic"). Since 1989, Berard has been a professor of World Languages at Wenatchee Valley College in Wenatchee, Washington, where he teaches Spanish, German and Latin (as a spoken language). He directs the *Conventiculum Vasintoniense*, *Septimana Californiana* (one of SALVI's annual Spoken-Latin conferences) and the *Circulus Seattlensis*. For more information about Stephen Berard, his writing and his activities, please visit [boreoccidentales.com](http://boreoccidentales.com).

# The Sphinx Heptology by Stephen A. Berard

## **CAPTI:** Fabula Menippeo-Hoffmanniana Americana

(continued from front)

Although Berard has chosen an ancient literary form called the Menippean Fable, many of his compositional principles are derived from Hoffmann himself, the inventor of fantastic realism and great-grandfather of the now popular magic realism. In magic realism — among whose principal exponents have been Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Miguel Angel Asturias, Jorge Luis Borges, Richard Brautigan, William Burroughs, Italo Calvino, Carlos Fuentes, and Virginia Woolf — a given story will normally seem realistic, although here and there, just under the surface of things, some kind of magic is at work. In Hoffmann's earlier fantastic realism, however, which Berard is cultivating in this book, realism alternates with utmost fantasy, and it is the job of the reader to establish the connections between these two modes.

Berard superimposes thoroughly modern themes and thought patterns on ancient literary genres and styles, emulating the hexameters of Juvenal, Lucan and Lucretius. In the prose portions of the first chapter, long, involved, sometimes misshapen sentences of an Apuleian type reflect the characters' emotions, confusions, and a generally rather Fellini-esque kind of exuberance. The style, however, varies from passage to passage. Poetic verse forms evolve gradually from hexameters to medieval meters to modern blank verse...which in turn represents changes in, or the outright dissolution of, the world of the various protagonists as well as providing a pleasant lesson in modern poetics.

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The *Heptologia Sphingis* carries the message of quantum holism. In telling his amusing stories, Berard endeavors to propagate that famous notion, repeatedly confirmed by physics experimentation, that each so-called "part" of the universe is simultaneously both part and whole, that everything in the cosmos is directly linked with everything else at the quantum level, and that things happening "here" are expressed one way or another in all "places"; that indeed, due to the proven phenomenon of quantum non-locality, the idea of "separate places" is an illusion...or, when seen in their wholeness, they are parts of a virtual hologram whose information is contained in no space. Berard has found fantastic realism, of all the literary styles, to be the most appropriate for conveying these ideas to his readers.

## **PRAECURSVS:** Fabula Neophysiologica (expected 2015)

In *Praecursus*, the reader comes to a greater understanding of how the diffuse compositional style of *Capti* is actually describing a first impression of an extremely holistic world view in which absolutely everyone and everything is directly connected to everyone and everything else...as well as how personality and individual identity can be viewed as somewhat arbitrary and even artificial constructs.

The central character is Tor, a *praecursor* engaged by a race of benevolent artificial super-beings to explore the possibilities of biological entities operating in the next higher dimensional level of existence in which there are four degrees of physical freedom and time is experienced in the fifth dimension. As Tor navigates through different stories and worlds — at times living fused with a hive-minded entity and existing now as a hologram, now as a computer subroutine — he learns to ride the waves of quantum flux...and eventually even to control them to a large extent.

## **EOS:** Carmen Methistoricum

Set mostly in the Eastern Mediterranean of the 4th Century C.E., *Eos* will be more of a poem-cum-prose-poem (like *Daemonologia* and *Sphinx*) — a poetic-fantastic meditation on the contrasts between Eastern and Western worldviews as experienced by a pair of ancient philosophers.

## **DAEMONOLOGIA:** Carmen Synaestheticum

Like the supermassive black hole swallowing whirling stars at the center of a large galaxy, *Daemonologia* is a highly fantastic poem-cum-prose-poem at the center of the *Heptologia Sphingis* that will tackle the issue of how an individual may or may not survive the overwhelming fact of an infinity of universes, realities, deities, and demons.

## **CAELA PONE CAELA:** Fabula Cubistica

This novel offers multiple stories — some cinematic and some occurring in the supposedly real world — intersecting in cubistic style with a segmented biography of 1940s child actress Peggy Anne Garner, whose life presents a poignant example of the roller coaster ride that is Hollywood.

## **TANTISPER:** Fabula Neoheroica

The *Tantisper* fable explores the distinction between religion and spirituality, addressing such existential questions as: Why do unembodied entities want to visit the physical plane in the first place? Why is Universal Consciousness so wrapped up in making up worlds? Does all this activity benefit anyone?

## **SPHINX:** Carmen Arcanum

Is reality a hostile "thing" out there reminiscent of the way Francis Bacon described "science," i.e., the natural world as we see it, a Sphinx ready to tear us apart? This poem balances — or perhaps floats — somewhere between spiritual parable and metaphysical poetry à la Eliot's *Four Quartets* in an attempt to explain who or what the Sphinx really is.